

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 01968 011630Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----117065 011656Z /43
P 011620Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4597
INFO AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 01968

STADIS////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

USEEC

FOR S/IL

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1 (IMPDET)
TAGS: ICFTU, ELAB, TS
SUBJ: IRVING BROWN CONVERSATION WITH ICFTU ON TUNISIA

REF: BRUSSELS 1893

1. VISITING BRUSSELS ON OTHER BUSINESS, IRVING BROWN,
AFL-CIO EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE, TELEPHONED ICFTU GENERAL
SECRETARY OTTO KERSTEN FEBRUARY 1 TO DISCUSS THE
TUNISIAN SITUATION. USEC LABOR ATTACHE WAS IN BROWN'S
HOTEL ROOM WHEN THE CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE.

2. BROWN PASSED ON TO KERSTEN HIS CANDID ASSESSMENT:

A. IN LAUNCHING A GENERAL STRIKE AND THUS CHALLENGING
THE GOVERNMENT, UGTT'S HABIB ACHOUR HAD TAKEN A FOOLISH
RISK AGAINST WHICH HE HAD BEEN WARNED (NOT JUST BY
BROWN BUT ALSO APPARENTLY BY THE ICFTU): "WE TOLD HIM."
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BRUSSE 01968 011630Z

B. EVENTS HAD UNFOLDED IN SUCH A WAY THAT NOW THE
BEST ACHOUR CAN EXPECT IS A FAIR TRIAL FOR HIMSELF AND
HIS ARRESTED COLLEAGUES AND A LIGHT SENTENCE, PERHAPS
EVEN A SUSPENDED SENTENCE (THOUGH THE SENTENCE WOULD
DEPEND ON THE WEIGHT OF THE EVIDENCE THE GOVERNMENT
WOULD PRESENT AGAINST THE UGTT LEADERS).

C. PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA, AN "HONEST MAN" IN THE GOVERNMENT, HAD DELAYED AS LONG AS HE COULD IN CRACKING DOWN ON ACHOUR, BUT THE UGTT GENERAL STRIKE AND CONSEQUENT VIOLENCE HAD LEFT NOUIRA WITH NO CHOICE. BOTH ALGERIA AND LIBYA WERE READY TO EXPLOIT A DETERIORATING SITUATION TO HELP BRING DOWN THE PRESENT TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT.

3. BROWN SUGGESTED THAT KERSTEN ADVISE HIS "PEOPLE" (I.E., EUROPEAN LABOR LEADERS) TO TAKE A CAUTIOUS LINE ON TUNISIA. "SURE, THEY CAN MAKE THEIR STATEMENTS," BUT THEY SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE REALITIES, AND SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON SEEING THAT THE UGTT LEADERS GET A FAIR AND OPEN TRIAL, PERHAPS WITH A DEFENSE LAWYER DESIGNATED BY THE ICFTU.

4. IN ANSWER TO KERSTEN'S QUESTION, BROWN SAID HE HAD RECOMMENDED THE SAME APPROACH TO AFL-CIO'S ERNIE LEE IN WASHINGTON, BUT THAT SO FAR HE HAD NO NEWS ON WHAT HAS BEEN DONE, PERHAPS BECAUSE GEORGE MEANY IS OUT OF TOWN.

5. KERSTEN THEN SAID THAT THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE ICFTU TO SUGGEST A "COMMON FRONT" ON TUNISIA. "WE TOLD THEM 'NYET'," KERSTEN SAID.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BRUSSE 01968 011630Z

6. ALTHOUGH KERSTEN INDICATED THAT HE AGREED WITH BROWN'S ASSESSMENT AND THE POLICY POSTURE BROWN RECOMMENDED, BROWN WAS NOT SURE THAT KERSTEN WOULD FOLLOW THROUGH. LATER IN MORNING, HE CALLED ENZO FRISO, ICFTU STAFFER WHO HAD BEEN WITH KERSTEN IN AFRICA, AND INVITED HIM TO HIS HOTEL ROOM. THE TWO HELD A PRIVATE MEETING DURING WHICH BROWN REPEATED THE VIEWS HE HAD EXPRESSED TO KERSTEN OVER THE PHONE. HINTON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR UNION OFFICIALS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BRUSSE01968
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1 (IMPDET)
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780048-0458
Format: TEL
From: BRUSSELS USEEC
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197802108/aaaadnhl.tel
Line Count: 103
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5d7908ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Reference: 78 BRUSSELS 1893
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3447246
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IRVING BROWN CONVERSATION WITH ICFTU ON TUNISIA
TAGS: ELAB, TS, US, ICFTU, AFL-CIO, (BROWN, IRVING), (KERSTEN, OTTO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5d7908ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014